History

In the fall of 2004 the First Year Programs and Disability Services department was reorganized. In this reorganization the programs designed for our First Year students were integrated into existing departments within the Student Life department. The Academic Advising and Disability Services areas continue to be joined together, with direction given by the Provost’s office, and it is these later two areas that will be the focus of this review. The program goals designed for the First Year Programs area have been assumed by the Student Life department.

This report details the progress that has been made in the Academic Advising and Disability Services area towards its program goals stated in the January 2004 proposal. Since the individual who originated the program goals is no longer with the college, and the original program goals were written prior to the departmental reorganization, they have been modified slightly to reflect their new areas of focus and based on the suggestions made by the Program Review Committee.

I. Review of the Original Program Goals from the January 2004 Proposal

A. Students with disabilities will learn to advocate with faculty and staff concerning their specific learning needs.

B. Students on academic probation will gain skills to succeed academically and take responsibility for their learning.

C. Students will begin to think of their major choice and class choices in light of their Christian calling.

II. Review of Program Review Committee Feedback

In March 2004, the Program Review Committee had the following suggestions:

A. “Identify the intended impact of specific teaching strategies.”

Each program goal has been expanded and elaborated on so that the “teachable moments” have been identified and explained. The goals pertaining to Disability Services have been further broken down based on the number of years the student has been receiving services to include smaller steps towards the overall goal. These smaller steps allow for more feedback and correction during the students initial year in the program and a greater degree of independence and responsibility during successive years.
B. “Some of your inputs would be strengthened if stated with greater specificity”

Each program goal has been elaborated upon to include specific steps to implement as well as more detailed assessment methods to determine the extent to which the program goals were met.

C. “It is important to include the ‘when’ and ‘how’ related to your assessment”

The original program goals have been expanded to include additional details as to when and how these learning objectives will be instituted.

III. Focus of the 2004-2005 Review Cycle, from the Updated January 2005 Proposal

Since the original scope of this area has been modified in recent years, and the leadership within the Academic Advising and Disability Services area has changed, a review of the programs ability to implement the updated Program Review goals was necessary. In our initial review there was insufficient evidence that we had the necessary structure in place to implement our program goals. We could not ensure that our students were receiving consistent instruction towards those goals, which made any evidence to come from this evaluation circumspect.

Of greatest concern was Program Review Goal A: “Students with Disabilities will learn to advocate with faculty and staff concerning their specific learning needs.” It was not clear that students had the necessary instruction in the procedures used by the Disability Services office and their own rights and responsibilities as Disability Services students to advocate with faculty and staff.

To this end the past year was spent ensuring that new Disability Service students were provided this information as part of their intake meeting during the first semester they received services from the Disability Services office. To facilitate this process a packet of information was produced for the incoming students, which included the following forms:

1. General letter of introduction for the new students which includes information on how they can start the accommodation process at the beginning of each semester if they so choose.
2. Initial application to receive services through Disability Services which provides the basic background on their history with the disability, their contact information and the name and number of the testing specialist who will be verifying their disability.
3. Verification of a disability form for their doctor/testing specialist to complete to verify their specific disability and the extent to which it impacts their educational abilities.
4. An information sheet that details the specific documents needed to support the various types of disabilities
5. Legal rights and responsibilities of Disability Services students
6. Confidentiality agreement for disability services
7. Procedure forms for the steps the students need to follow in order to receive the various services we offer.

With these additional steps in place we can assure that each Disability Services student receives the same information, thereby strengthening the reliability and validity of our results.

**IV. Focus of the 2005-2006 Review Cycle, from the Updated January 2005 Proposal**

**A. Focus 1: Begin working with First Year and Returning students on taking ownership of their disability and the rights and responsibilities included therein. Specifically we are:**

1. **Meeting with each student new to the Disability Services program to inform them of their rights and responsibilities and work with them on describing their disability to their professors.**

   Of the 5 new students who have identified themselves as Disability Services students, I have met with 3 and followed this procedure. One of the students I have not seen has missed one appointment with me, the other has not responded to my efforts to meet with him. Neither of these students is currently receiving accommodations this semester.

   For these 3 new students I am keeping records of when they request services through my office and if they follow the correct procedures to receive those accommodations. Right now I am collecting evidence for the following accommodations: Proctored exams, notetakers, tutors, and students needing books on tape or to have their books scanned using a software program designed to scan and audibly “read” the text to them.

   I have not yet checked in with the professors of the 3 students who are receiving accommodations this semester to make sure that the students have given them copies of their accommodation letters and have spoke with them about their disability. Related to this, I also have not followed up with the students who have not given their letters to their professors yet.

2. **Meeting with each student in their second year in the Disability Services program to remind them of their rights and responsibilities (and hold them accountable to these responsibilities) and work with them on describing their disability to their professors.**

   Of the second year Disability Services students, I have currently met with 11 of them. For these students I am keeping records of when they request services through my office and if they follow the correct procedures to receive those accommodations. During their second year, if time allows, I will still make every
attempt to honor their request, even if they have not followed the correct procedures, as long as it is reasonable.

Right now I am collecting evidence for the following accommodations: Proctored exams, notetakers, tutors, and students needing books on tape or to have their books scanned using a software program designed to scan and audibly “read” the text to them.

I have not yet checked in with the professors of these students to make sure that they have received copies of the student’s accommodation letters and that the students have spoke to them about their disability. Related to this, I also have not followed up with the students who have not given their letters to their professors yet.

3. Meeting with each student in their third and fourth year in the Disability Services program to remind them of their rights and responsibilities (and hold them accountable to these responsibilities) and work with them on describing their disability to their professors.

Of the third and fourth year Disability Services students, I have currently met with 9 of them. For these students I am keeping records of when they request services through my office and if they follow the correct procedures to receive those accommodations. During their third year I will not be allowing them to receive services if they do not follow the proper procedures.

Right now I am collecting evidence for the following accommodations: Proctored exams, notetakers, tutors, and students needing books on tape or to have their books scanned using a software program designed to scan and audibly “read” the text to them.

I have not yet checked in with the professors of these students to make sure that they have received copies of the student’s accommodation letters and that the students have spoke to them about their disability. Related to this, I also have not followed up with the students who have not given their letters to their professors yet.

B. Focus 2: Continue working with students on academic probation to help them gain skills to succeed academically and take responsibility for their learning

1. I have been meeting with students over the last two semesters and have their self-assessment data coded, but have not analyzed the data yet for the semesters after they were on probation.

2. I am currently working with students who are currently on probation to identify key areas of success and failure in the previous semester, to develop an individual
program for success and to identify resources on campus that can assist them in their academic goals.

V. Summary of Current Assessment

Overall our activities this past year have given us a strong format in which to assess our educational objectives, and have already yielded structural changes to the information that we provide to students. These initial changes bring us in line with the typical information given to Disability Services students at neighboring educational institutions and allow for a more uniform method of assessment in line with our program goals. Our work this past year gives us the foundation by which we can feel confident in the validity of our results.

We have already begun to collect data in line with two of the three modified program review goals and are excited to see where this data takes us in program review in the future.

V. What’s next?

A. Work on the remaining portion of the program review goals, specifically:

1. Looking at the institutional structure of the academic advising program, and the possibility of exploring alternate designs for advising students within their first two years.

2. Increased connection and networking between the Office of Life Planning and our advising of First Year students.

3. Including a stated emphasis on choosing majors and classes in light of a Christian calling through our published materials on advising and the advisor training of new faculty.

B. Continue to collect data on students with disabilities and our students who are on academic probation